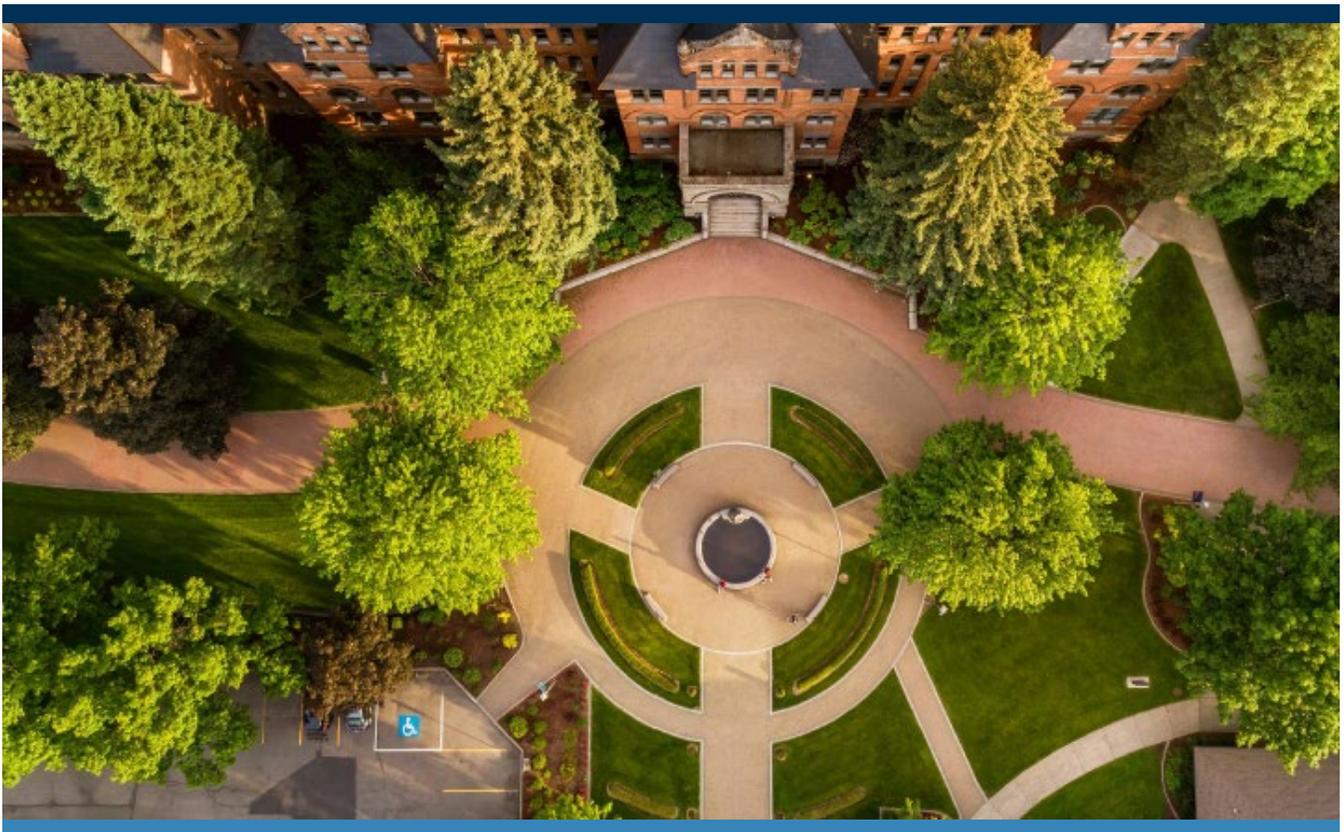


GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

Chief Marketing & Communications Officer

Leadership Profile

2025–2026



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

Gonzaga University seeks a strategic, creative, and distinguished leader to serve as its Chief Marketing and Communications Officer (CMCO). A member of the President's cabinet, the CMCO will steward a powerful, cohesive brand identity while advancing a unified and coordinated marketing and communications strategy that advances Gonzaga's Catholic, Jesuit, and humanistic mission, elevating the University's reputation and amplifying its impact.

The CMCO will lead Gonzaga's Office of Marketing and Communications, oversee a strategic planning process for the unit, and collaborate with academic and administrative leaders to ensure marketing and communications are aligned with University strategy and goals, balancing support for both unit-level and institutional needs and priorities. This process will include an assessment and exploration of organizational structures, processes, and resources to enable a fully modernized marketing and communications enterprise at Gonzaga.

Located in Spokane, Washington, Gonzaga University is a private Catholic institution founded in 1887. Rooted in the Jesuit tradition, Gonzaga is dedicated to fostering academic excellence, social justice, and the holistic development of its students. The University offers a wide range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, emphasizing a rigorous education that prepares students to lead and serve in a global society. With a strong commitment to community engagement and ethical leadership, Gonzaga cultivates an inclusive environment where students are encouraged to explore their passions and make a positive impact on the world.

Collaborating closely with the President's cabinet and marketing and communications professionals distributed throughout the University, the CMCO will ensure consistent, cohesive messaging across Gonzaga. The CMCO will leverage a recently completed brand awareness study to amplify storytelling, enhance audience segmentation, and strengthen strategic messaging across Gonzaga's diverse constituencies. The role will require collaborative leadership, exceptional relationship building skills, and an aptitude for proactive media and crisis communications planning. The CMCO will leverage modern marketing and communication technologies, including digital platforms, data analytics, and AI-driven tools, to enhance engagement and outreach strategies across the higher education sector.

The successful candidate will have proven experience enhancing the reputation of global brands, a deep understanding of higher education and its societal impact, and the capacity to promote Gonzaga's mission and identity as a Catholic, Jesuit, humanistic university.

Candidates must have at least 10 years of professional experience in brand marketing and communications in the education, not-for-profit, government, and/or private sectors. A bachelor's degree in marketing, public relations, or a related field and a minimum of 5 years of progressively responsible supervisory experience are required.

To submit a confidential nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see *Procedure for Candidacy* at the end of this document.

Role and Responsibilities

The Chief Marketing and Communications Officer is a member of the president's cabinet and leads Gonzaga University's marketing, communications, and brand management efforts. The CMCO oversees an Office of Marketing and Communications that supports and advances the University's mission, goals, and priorities, amplifying the impact of Gonzaga's academic, research, and teaching enterprise as well as the University's successes in enrollment, fundraising, talent acquisition, community relations, industry partnerships, and other important areas.

The Chief Marketing and Communications Officer's primary responsibilities include the following:

Brand Stewardship

- Own and champion an institutional brand and identity that promotes Gonzaga's Catholic, Jesuit, and humanistic mission.
- Ensure unified and consistent communications and messaging across Gonzaga University.

Campaigns and Initiatives

- Spearhead planned and emerging communications strategies, brand campaigns, intra-university messaging, and strategic initiatives.
- Collaborate with the President on annual reports, institutional updates, and other strategic deliverables.
- Inform, guide, and support unit-based marketing efforts to ensure cohesiveness and continuity across Gonzaga.
- Prioritize innovative digital strategies, advanced analytics, and emerging technologies to enhance brand impact and audience engagement.

Operational Leadership

- Oversee a central Office of Marketing and Communications, establishing short- and long-term goals, objectives, and priorities and driving execution in pursuit of those objectives.
- Monitor key performance indicators to assess the impact and effectiveness of initiatives, including efforts to enhance Gonzaga's reputation and visibility regionally, nationally, and globally.
- Use data analytics to measure the effectiveness of digital and traditional marketing campaigns and adjust strategies accordingly.
- Establish a project escalation strategy for the office.

Crisis Management and Response

- Safeguard the University's reputation by proactively assessing, monitoring, and preparing for reputational risks.
- Ensure effective crisis communication plans, including official University responses to potential and active situations.

Institutional Stewardship

- Serve on University committees and initiatives that impact marketing, communications and brand efforts, ranging from technology to human resources to mission initiatives.
- Represent the University at external community events involving prospective students and families, current students and families, alumni, donors, and community members.
- Manage projects with internal and external partners as appropriate.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Gonzaga University's Chief Marketing and Communications Officer will provide a strategic vision for institutional marketing, communications, and brand management while leading a universitywide Office of Marketing and Communications. The CMCO will develop and implement a comprehensive, multidimensional communications and marketing strategy in alignment with the University's strategic goals and priorities.

Specifically, the CMCO will be expected to:

Enhance and elevate Gonzaga's brand

- Position Gonzaga as a future-focused university, integrating innovative digital strategies and personalized engagement while honoring Gonzaga's traditions and values and building on a legacy of academic excellence and transformative impact.
- Further strengthen Gonzaga's image and reputation by fully leveraging the University's brand equity, particularly its academic and research excellence and achievements.
- Increase Gonzaga's visibility through strategic market penetration.
- Leverage digital, social, and other new and emerging media to enhance Gonzaga's online presence and engagement.

Develop and advance a cohesive and coordinated marketing and communications strategy

- Lead a strategic planning process for Marketing and Communications that defines and promotes a consistent, dynamic brand across platforms and distribution channels, working in close collaboration with University leaders, colleges, schools, and other academic and administrative units. This process will include an assessment and exploration of structures, processes, and resources to enable a fully modernized marketing and communications organization at Gonzaga.
- Partner with academic and administrative units to support their strategic initiatives and objectives while enhancing unified storytelling across the University.
- Develop, guide, and measure integrated marketing and communications strategies and campaigns, ensuring alignment with University strategies and goals and balancing support for both unit-level and institutional needs and priorities.

Strengthen media relations and crisis communications

- Build and maintain strong relationships with local, national, and international media outlets and serve as the University's spokesperson as necessary.
- Support crisis and emergency preparedness through proactive anticipation of potential risks and development of crisis management protocols and communication plans.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

Gonzaga University seeks a strategic, creative, and distinguished marketing and brand strategy leader to serve as its Chief Marketing and Communications Officer.

The successful candidate will have proven experience enhancing the reputation of global brands, a deep understanding of higher education and its societal impact, and the capacity to promote Gonzaga's mission and identity as a Catholic, Jesuit, humanistic university.

Candidates must have at least 10 years of professional experience in brand marketing and communications in the education, not-for-profit, government, and/or private sectors. A bachelor's degree in marketing, public relations, or a related field and a minimum of 5 years of progressively responsible supervisory experience are required.

In addition, the ideal candidate will possess the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated success developing, implementing, and managing a comprehensive marketing strategy within budget parameters.
- Advanced understanding of marketing and communications best practices, technologies, trends, and emerging innovations.
- Collaborative orientation with exceptional ability to lead through influence, empathy, and consensus building.
- Capacity to build effective relationships with diverse stakeholders.
- Exceptional interpersonal and oral and written communications skills.
- Ability to navigate a complex academic environment.
- Experience partnering with athletics and an understanding of the dynamic collegiate athletic conference landscape in order to support Gonzaga's move to the Pac-12 conference.
- Results-orientation and strong organizational and operational acumen.
- Ability to build and lead a high-performing team of creative professionals.
- Understanding of and ability to leverage emerging technology, including AI, to maximize the reach and effectiveness of marketing and communications efforts.
- Demonstrable experience in public relations and crisis communications, including the ability to create plans and execute strategies to effectively communicate to key audiences in emergency and reputational crisis situations.
- Awareness and understanding of major developments in higher education, communications, technology, politics, and other domains, and ability to proactively identify potential disruptions.
- Capacity to leverage a keen understanding of the external environment to position Gonzaga for competitive advantage and greater success.

About the Office of Marketing & Communications

Gonzaga University's Office of Marketing and Communications is an integrated, universitywide organization that extends Gonzaga presence and reach, using online, social, and traditional media to bring news, information, and stories about Gonzaga and its people and impact to the world. The office plays an important role in the Gonzaga campus community, serving as central communications hub and providing services and support to campus constituencies: Services include the following:

- **Marketing and Advertising**

Planning and creative development of recruitment and fundraising campaigns, program and event promotion, and other strategic brand promotion initiatives, working as needed with external agencies for creative services and media buying.

- **Media Relations**

Engagement and relationship management with local, regional, national, and global media organizations to provide timely and relevant news and information about Gonzaga and its people, including response to information requests.

- **Community and Public Relations**

Cultivation of relationships with community members and external constituents and partners to advance Gonzaga's mission and impact, particularly efforts to improve the vitality of Spokane, Eastern Washington, and the Pacific Northwest.

- **Internal Communications**

Management and production of campus community communications, including Morning Mail, a daily email digest of news and announcements, and Spirit, a monthly newsletter.

(continued)





- **Emergency Communications**

Collaboration with University leadership, Emergency Preparedness and Risk Management, Campus Security, and Information Technology Services to inform the Gonzaga community of potentially life-threatening emergencies and disruptions to normal operations, including through [ZagAlert](#), Gonzaga's emergency communications system.

- **Publications**

Management and production of Gonzaga's flagship publications, including [Gonzaga Magazine](#), [Report of the President](#), the monthly e-newsletter [Gonzaga News](#), and the School of Law's [The Gonzaga Lawyer](#), among others.

- **Photography and Video**

Professional photography and video services that amplify and support Gonzaga's brand, including enrollment and fundraising initiatives and events, programs, and mission-related activities across Gonzaga.

- **Web Design and Development**

Management and oversight of [Gonzaga's website](#) and myGU Intranet in collaboration with Information Technology Services.

- **Trademark and Licensing**

Oversight of Gonzaga University's name and trademarks.

About Gonzaga University

Gonzaga is a premier liberal arts-based university renowned for providing an exemplary Jesuit education that empowers its graduates to lead, shape, and serve their chosen fields and the communities to which they belong. The university's success is rooted in a continual focus on strengthening the educational experiences that define and distinguish Gonzaga. What began with an initial class of 18 students in 1887 has since transformed into a nationally recognized, comprehensive liberal arts university with nearly 7,500 students with the skills to be leaders in their communities and in the careers they choose.

From the creative arts to the applied sciences, Gonzaga exposes minds to more than just great thinking. With a 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio and teachers ranked among the best in the nation, the university stretches perspectives, stimulates curiosity, and discovers pathways to progress. Each learning opportunity is an invitation to further inquiry, encouraging students to look for what others may not see.

Mission

Gonzaga University is an exemplary learning community that educates students for lives of leadership and service for the common good. In keeping with its Catholic, Jesuit, and humanistic heritage and identity, Gonzaga models and expects excellence in academic and professional pursuits and intentionally develops the whole person intellectually, spiritually, culturally, physically, and emotionally. Through engagement with knowledge, wisdom, and questions informed by classical and contemporary perspectives, Gonzaga cultivates in its students the capacities and dispositions for reflective and critical thought, lifelong learning, spiritual growth, ethical discernment, creativity, and innovation. The Gonzaga experience fosters a mature commitment to dignity of the human person, social justice, diversity, intercultural competence, global engagement, solidarity with the poor and vulnerable, and care for the planet. Grateful to God, the Gonzaga community carries out this mission with responsible stewardship of its physical, financial, and human resources.





Rankings and Recognition

- No. 21 for Undergraduate Engineering among non-doctorate institutions¹
- No. 14 Civil Engineering program among non-doctorate institutions¹
- Recognized as a Best National University; listed in the top 24% of the 434 schools which received designation.¹
- Approved to join Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious honor society.
- No. 17 in the country for best undergraduate teaching.¹
- No. 48 in the country for most innovative universities.¹
- Named one of the "Best 391 Colleges"²
- Top 10 school for veterans, their spouses and military families (2025–26 Military Friendly School)
- Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award for comprehensive efforts in promoting diversity, equity and inclusion across campus. (*Insight Into Diversity, 2024*)
- No. 21 in the country for "Students Who Study Most."²
- Top 100 green college (The Princeton Review Guide to Green Colleges, 2025)
- No. 14 in the country for Best Health Services²
- Ranked among the top 56 prettiest college campuses in America (*Condé Nast Traveler, 2025*)
- Named to the Forbes' America's Top Colleges List (*Forbes, 2025*)
- No. 15 in the country for excellence in service learning¹

See more [facts and figures](#).

¹ *U.S. News & World Report, 2026*

² *The Princeton Review's Best 391 Colleges: 2026 Edition*

Academics: Teaching, Research, and Creative Inquiry

Steeped in Jesuit tradition, Gonzaga is proud of the academic environment that has been created over the last 138 years. Research, scholarship, and creative inquiry occupy critical roles among the faculty, who bring knowledge, insights, and skills from their disciplines into the classroom, laboratory, or studio space. In turn, students benefit through opportunities to learn, discover, and engage in creative endeavors under the guidance of expert professors.

Colleges and Schools

Gonzaga offers 16 undergraduate degrees through 53 majors, 68 minors and 73 concentrations; 23 master's degrees; and 5 doctoral-level degrees through seven colleges and schools:

- [College of Arts and Sciences](#)
- [School of Business](#)
- [School of Education](#)
- [School of Engineering and Applied Science](#)
- [School of Health Sciences](#)
- [School of Leadership Studies](#)
- [School of Law](#)

Academic Centers

- [Career & Professional Development](#)
- [Center for Global Engagement](#)
- [Center for Lifelong Learning](#)
- [Center for Student Academic Success](#)
- [Center for the Study of Hate](#)
- [Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry](#)

Academic Institutes

- [Institute for Climate, Water, and the Environment](#)
- [Institute for Informatics and Applied Technology](#)
- [Woodley Institute for Civil Engagement and Humanistic Dialogue](#)





University Leadership

Katia Passerini, Ph.D. **President**

Dr. Katia Passerini joined Gonzaga University as its 27th president on July 15, 2025, becoming the second layperson to serve in the role at the Jesuit institution since its founding in 1887. President Passerini was previously provost and executive vice president at Seton Hall University where she also served as interim president for one year. Prior to that, she was a distinguished chair and dean at St. John's University and a professor of management information systems and dean of the Honors College at the New Jersey Institute of Technology.

President Passerini's academic expertise and research are rooted in information systems and management. Her research focuses on understanding macro-economic drivers of knowledge management, studying wireless broadband applications and industry trends, and computer-assisted learning and education. Her professional background includes work outside higher education, including projects at Booz Allen Hamilton (now part of PriceWaterhouseCoopers) and the World Bank, where she focused on information technology projects in Europe, North America, and the South Pacific. A certified project management professional (PMP), she previously worked in the automotive and telecommunications industries.

Dr. Passerini was a Fulbright Student Scholar, Fulbright Administrator Scholar, and Italian National Research Council Fellow, and has received several funded scholarships, awards, and grants. She earned undergraduate degrees in political science and economics from LUISS University and University of Rome, respectively, and M.B.A. and Ph.D. degrees from The George Washington University as well as a Certificate in Business Project Management from New York University.



Spokane: The Lilac City

Spokane became a city in 1881, primarily known for its natural resources: farms, forests, fur, and mines, as well as being a railroad hub for shipping. The original inhabitants of this region are the Spokane people, who were forcibly removed and placed on reservations, as was the case with the many neighboring tribes in the Inland Northwest. In their Salish language, Spokane means “Children of the Sun.” The Spokane River and its falls were the source of life and livelihood for the Spokane people – and also attracted early settlers interested in their hydroelectric potential, rugged beauty, and life-sustaining qualities.

Today, Spokane is a bustling hub of the Pacific Northwest. Greater Spokane has a population of 593,466, making it the largest city along the northern tier of the United States between Seattle and Minneapolis. Gonzaga is less than half a mile from downtown Spokane and 15 minutes from the Spokane International Airport. The city is epitomized by its slogan, “Creative by Nature,” offering vast opportunities for a range of interests and outdoor activities.

The region’s scenic setting offers unlimited opportunities for enjoying the Northwest’s great outdoors. The area’s 76 lakes, three skiing areas, 33 golf courses, and three major shopping malls offer faculty, staff, and students a variety of off-campus pursuits. Multiple music venues, live theater and Broadway plays, the Spokane Symphony, three professional sports teams, and a vital downtown shopping and entertainment district add a lively spirit to the mix. Numerous independent restaurants feature local and organic food and emphasize sustainable eating practices. Wine enthusiasts can visit several tasting rooms and wineries, while beer lovers will enjoy the ever-growing craft brewery scene.

Spokane has been selected as an All-America City multiple times. In recent years, *Parenting Magazine* ranked Spokane one of the top 10 places to raise a family, and MarketWatch report ranked Spokane the No. 1 city in the U.S. to save money. Spokane also ranks as the top city in the U.S. for freelancers and has been selected as the best place to live on a six-figure salary.

Learn more about [Spokane](#).

Procedure for Candidacy

All inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. Candidates should provide a CV or resume and a letter of application that addresses the responsibilities and requirements described in this leadership profile. Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#). Candidates will be considered until an appointment is made.

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to

Melissa Fincher, Philip Tang, and Jenna Brumleve
GonzagaCMCO@wittkieffer.com



The salary range for this position is \$235,000 to \$250,000. Appointment at or near the top of the salary range will be reserved for candidates with exceptional qualifications and demonstrated leadership excellence. Pay is based on several factors including but not limited to education, work experience, certifications, geographic location, etc. This role may be eligible for additional compensation based on merit and/or achievement of specific goals. In addition to salary, Gonzaga University offers benefits such as, comprehensive benefits package, tuition waiver and 401k contribution (all benefits are subject to eligibility requirements).

Gonzaga University is a Jesuit, Catholic, humanistic institution, and is therefore interested in candidates who will contribute to its distinctive mission. Gonzaga University is a committed EEO/AA employer and diversity candidates are encouraged to apply. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to their disability status and/or protected veteran status.